

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend the Specification as follows, wherein additions are shown with underlining and deletions are shown with strike-through formatting (or between double brackets (“[[]]”)).

At page 1, please amend the paragraph beginning at line 20 as follows:

DE 102 11 728 A1 discloses a method and a device for ~~packing~~ picking goods. Here, ~~packing~~ picking containers are transported under computer control to ~~packing~~ picking areas, and a warehouse management control unit transmits order data to a material flow control computer and the material flow control computer controls destinations of the ~~packing~~ picking containers in such a way that the ~~packing~~ picking containers are transported to ~~packing~~ picking areas where the goods to be ~~packing~~ picked are located.

At page 3, please amend the paragraph beginning at line 13 as follows:

Furthermore, it is advantageous for the warehouse management control unit to transmit the order data to the material flow control computer and for the material flow control computer to control the material flow in such a way that the goods and/or additional goods are placed into picking ~~packing~~ containers and/or directly into a transport container provided for the shipment as a postal item.

At page 9, please amend the paragraphs beginning at line 3 as follows:

A device according to the invention that is especially suitable for carrying out the method is ~~characterized by~~ may include ~~the~~ a combination of the following features:

[[.]] a means for receiving address information and a goods identification code that identifies the goods;

[[•]] a means for storing the address information and the goods identification code;

[[•]] a means for linking the goods to the address information and

[[•]] ~~a means to link the goods to the address information.~~

a means for delivering the goods linked to the address information as a postal item.

At page 9, please amend the paragraph beginning at line 13 as follows:

In Another another likewise advantageous embodiment of the device, is configured in such a way that the means to link the goods to the address information is a transmitter that is designed in such a way that it can transmit the address information to a transponder that can be affixed to the goods.

At page 9, please amend the paragraph beginning at line 23 as follows:

Additional advantages, special features and practical embodiments of the invention can be understood from the following description of preferred embodiments making reference to the drawing figures.

At page 10, please amend the paragraphs beginning at line 10 as follows:

In especially preferred examples, (Fig. 3) the ring processes 100 are characterized in that the first process step starts, for example, with the customer 110 of an on-line shop, with a person interested in some real estate or with a person interested in a product that is going to be auctioned. In contrast to traditional business models, here, it is such a customer or interested person who initiates an electronic process that has immediate effects 120 on the electronic administration system of a seller 130. Without involvement on the part of the seller 130, a customer 110 enters his/her complete master data into the administration system of the seller 130, expresses an interest to make a purchase or places a bid in an auction.

Through the system integration of the system of the customer 110 (client) with the system of the seller 130 (server), it is ultimately the customer 110 who controls the goods management system of a seller 130 from whom services are expected. If these services are actually performed by the seller 130 and if the seller 130 sends the customer 110 an electronic message 140 to this effect, then the circle, which is designated as the ring process 100, is closed. ~~The figure below shows such a ring process.~~

Ring processes of this type are also referred to as “order-to-delivery” processes since an uninterrupted electronic (ring) process chain exists from the start of the process (order) initiated by the customer 110 to the fulfillment of the performance (delivery). Electronic order-to-delivery ring processes 100 are common nowadays in many large commercial organizations for purposes of ordering additional stock of products from the manufacturer.

If the ordering party is not an end customer but rather a merchant 150 (Fig. 4), it is generally the case that it is not client systems of the merchant 150 that interact with server systems of the manufacturer 160 or wholesaler 170 but rather that goods management systems are used by both parties. In this case, the goods management system initiates a ring process 100 of ordering goods from the manufacturer 160 or wholesaler 170 and, when the goods are delivered, said system likewise receives the delivery status transmitted electronically.

This translates into the possibility of interlinked ring processes 100 that are currently being introduced at many companies and commercial organizations. A customer 110 can, for example, start a first ring process 102 by entering an order into the system of a seller or merchant 150 and, optionally receiving a delivery status in return. This system of the merchant/seller 150, in turn, orders the goods in a second electronic ring process 104 from the system of the wholesaler 170, which then, if applicable, opens a third ring process 106 for placing an order from the manufacturer 160.

An especially preferred embodiment of the invention is characterized in that franking – in the sense of an electronically mapped ring process 100 – is initiated and/or controlled by the recipient of a postal item. In this manner, effects of process optimization can also be utilized in the realm of franking.